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# Researching on management with a focus on everyday activities and practice<sup>1</sup>

Paper for the December 2014 Conference in the Danish Academy of Leadership

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DRAFT

*G<sup>2</sup> 1: "It is important to discuss what we are bad at."*

*G2: "The exciting is on which areas we are bad in handling things. We are bad – tied up in routines – does not have time to do anything else"*

Studying management as everyday activities and practices is to us the same as analyzing together with managers what to them seems bad or inefficient, but also what they experience being good at, and not at least how managers try to handle everyday challenges. The purpose of this paper is to present, analyze, and discuss the design of a method - we continuously are developing - for doing research on management as it goes on at a daily basis in business organizations.

The method, which might be useful in studies of a broad array of managerial tasks within organizations, and perhaps even broader, is in the form presented here focusing on the interplay between changes in the environment affecting the organization, and how the responses to such changes are developed within the organization. In this way the center of our research becomes the processes of management.

As part of the design some preconditions on how we understand management, organizations, environment, everyday, and practice will be presented, and it will be shown from where the inspiration for these conceptual understandings originates. Secondly the methodological design and its input will be laid out and discussed. Thirdly we want to analyze how it is possible to practice re-

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<sup>1</sup> This is a draft version of the paper announced in the abstract titled: 'At undersøge ledelse med et blik på hverdag og praksis'

<sup>2</sup> G1 is one managing director in firm G, G2 is the other, E, K, S, and X are the other four firms in this study, and the quotes are taken from conversations recorded in August and September 2014.

search using the design. Finally, we want to discuss the possibilities and the limitations of the design from a critical angle.

### **Methodological, theoretical, and paradigmatic preconditions**

*E1: 'It was [at a moment where] the financial situation looks fine – and where there were no signs that we are running into problems. And suddenly we are standing in the middle of a morass – and the financial results look [as if] the finish [in financial terms will turn out] on the wrong side of zero.'*

It seems sometimes to be the case for many managers that they suddenly are taken by surprise because things have developed in quite another direction than they expected. Management, especially when it is handling responses to what happens in the environment of the organization, seems often to be characterized as going on in a framework of emergence (Mintzberg & Waters 1985) and uncertainty. A look into practice, as it is shown in our previous research projects (Larsen & Rasmussen 2013), tells that in many situations management has to improvise its responses, often repeat several times - and experience what happens.

This illuminates the first precondition for our design, which stipulates that the world, both locally and globally, is in constant change and flux, and that even if organizations might have some – limited – influence on the construction of the future neither people in general nor managers have any possibility of predicting with any certainty how the future develops. In this view our design is inspired by traditional pragmatic theory (James 1909/1985, Mead 1934/1974), and by the use of these perspectives within an organizational framework (Tsoukas & Chia 2002).

The second precondition for the design presented here is inspired by social construction (Gergen 2009) and communication (Shotter & Cunliffe 2003) and from theoreticians within neighboring fields (Weick 1995, Mead 1934/1974), and this emphasizes that meaning is created between people in processes where they act together. Acting could for example be the process of producing physical objects, direct interactions between people working together, and the process of oral communication between two or more people. Important is here that meaning does not exist as any fixed entity, but is constantly constructed and reconstructed through such interactions and encounters – and often meaning is only recognized (or in our language: constructed) after such processes (Weick 1979:134).

The combination of the first preconditions: that the world is constantly becoming, and the second: the construction of meaning, point in the direction of a third precondition, also to a large extent inspired by pragmatic viewpoints: Knowledge is not as such pre-produced when we are speaking about how to handle specific situations and processes in practice. Knowledge is constantly reproduced and taking shape after the specific situation, the conditions and the people participating.

*G1: 'it is about strengthening your present markets. And then there are other countries that are interesting: We have just started in Russia – and that is suddenly [in the summer 2014] not something we should do!'*

To manage is to a large extent to be able rather suddenly to choose a new direction, because the environment is changing continuously and unpredictably. And all the time we are together with fellow human beings, we participate in the construction of knowledge, and in this way take part in constructing our present world.

The fourth precondition concerns one of the processes limiting the creative process of the production of knowledge, meaning and perhaps becoming. From 'Wohnen' (Heidegger 1951) or duration thinking (Chia & Holt 2006) the idea is taken that we live embedded in our 'small' part of the world – and not constantly as 'building constructors', but woven into our daily life, companions, and fellows at work, and that we get accustomed to these conditions and take them-for-granted. We are an integrated part of our local world in which we 'inter-act' (Hosking 2010) and together with the other people close to us defines what is right, true, and efficient.

Connected to this precondition routines play an important role. From one of the most well-known examples of routines – the art of biking – it becomes clear that human beings are able to learn routines that hardly ever can be forgotten. This also points in the direction of social and work routines (Orr 1996) that have been learned and might be hard to forget. Routines are a very – perhaps the most - useful part of our tools for acting in our world (Feldman & Pentland 2003), but are of course also something that might be seen as a hindrance for acting in new ways in a world of becoming. How to live with these two contradictory preconditions becomes an important part of what our method has to be able to study.

This also forms a precondition that defines a framework for our design: Organizations, or as we prefer to name it: organizing, might at the same time be seen as a tool for change, but also as a tool for stabilizing (Weick & Quinn 1999). This way of seeing organizing is closely related to the above mentioned contradiction. The way our design tries to reveal this in the organizing process is by using the metaphor of meshwork (Ingold 2011). To see organizing in this perspective is to see it as streams of activities sometimes interacting with each other to create synergy, sometimes to become a contradiction, and sometime hardly to affect each other. This also takes an inspiration from and at the same time integrates a process perspective on organizing (Pettigrew 1992).

To combine the organizing with the broader world-perspective of becoming sets the course for our effort to construct the design. That is how management constructs and organizes the responses to emergence and uncertainty. Our precondition is here that the construction of such responses can be seen as a kind of wayfaring (Ingold 2008), or wayfinding (Chia & Holt 2009), which is to see actions and decisions as an ongoing process - as constructing the road as we use it. This might sometimes be seen as processes including a large number of incremental changes, but also, when it is

needed, something that might be named an organizational 'turn-around' in traditional business language.

*E1: 'and then the big knife has been used.'*

One of the ways language is used is to express strong metaphors when the situation is ready for a turn-around. But embracing it all kinds of utterances in all kinds of language the precondition for how we interpret language is defined by language as not being a tool for transporting knowledge from one person to another or ways to mirror 'realities', it is instead a 'tool' for creating meaning and action (Wittgenstein 1953, Alvesson & Kärreman 2000). To us this does not mean that language is everything as some post-modernists seem to be saying (Alvesson & Skjölberg 2009:187), but it points at the all-important role language has in the construction of meaning, action, organizing, and managing (Cunliffe 2001).

The last precondition for our design to mention here is how we interpret management and/or leadership. We do that in a relational perspective. Management and leadership are to us processes with a large overlap, so separating them is not any prioritized task for us in this paper. Instead management/leadership will be seen here as processes that take place between people, and much more widespread than only activities done by formally appointed leaders. Management is something everyone together with others most of the time is busy doing (Cunliffe & Eriksen 2011; Hosking, Gergen & Dachler 1995; Uhl-Bien 2006). Management is in this way not so much about giving orders, but about participating in creating meaning, conditions for action, and (re-)forming the 'taken-for-granted'.

### **The design of the method: Inspirations and practical constructing processes**

We have together been constructing and have at the same time been using previous editions of this design for approximately seven years in a number of research projects – and we have in the same period gathered inspirations and ideas both from our own practice and at the same time from methodological, organizational and sociology of science articles, papers and books. In this part of the paper we will reveal some of the main inspirations as we see them and use them today for the ongoing development of the methodological design.

What has been most important to us is the way we see how conversations construct our local world through the process of sense making - as Weick and with him many others express it (Weick 1979; Weick 1995) – or in our vocabulary the process of meaning construction. This way of seeing such processes defines to us that nothing of interest is constructed finally, but is constantly up for interpretation and reconstruction. So studying the activities of human beings has to be done in co-operation with practitioners actively participating in the meaning construction process.

In this way our design is rather close to what Mats Alvesson (Alvesson 2003) is using the term 'localist' for. Methodologically this means that knowledge emerging in conversations is a kind of snapshot of meanings and situations that might change in the next second, and that such meanings and interpretations of situations are very local, perhaps only shared in the specific situation by the participants in this exact conversation.

For this reason our design is founded in a social constructionist perspective that focuses on that the process of construction of meaning and specific knowledge always happens between those participating in the conversation (Gergen 2001; Gergen 2009). This should not be interpreted as a process, where every participant in a conversation constructs identical meaning, instead the process of meaning construction always makes it possible to differ in meaning, shares meaning with others, or perhaps leave the conversation. Conversation might in these processes include oral communication, sms', e-mails, and the writing and reading of more formal documents.

To study conversations is to be participating in conversations. Every participant in a conversation is at the same time - more or less systematically - studying it. This does not only mean that conversation is a dynamic process sometimes directly goal-directed and at other times rather anarchic or chaotic. It also means that a conversation constantly constructs and re-constructs meaning. So the design has to be able to contain situations where we as researchers participate in direct conversations with the actors, i.e. managers. And participating does not mean just sitting and listening, it means becoming an active integrated part in these conversations.

*G1 '...but we sat down and looked upon : What are we good at –  
that became a fairly large project: We are able to develop a  
brand – and to design.'*

An important way for managers to improve managerial skills and to develop efficient solutions for the organization seems to be together with other managers to discuss the strategic direction of the organization. But it seems at the same time to be an activity that they often do not think they have the time for. They want to spend more time for this, but often they use the time and keep their focus on the localist perspective of daily operations.

To us all perspectives are local (Alvesson & Kärreman 2000) and combined with the social constructionist methodological stance, this of course is destroying all aspirations of objectivity. We do not think that interaction between managers and between people as such functions and can be researched upon without interpretations. To understand the process of construction of meaning it is important to be present in the conversations – and to be present includes becoming involved and participating.

As a matter of 'fact' the process of management is a process of participating in creating meaning. One of the ways our design is influenced is through the idea that management in itself is a process of authoring (Cunliffe 2001; Shotter & Cunliffe 2003). The main idea is that an important part of

managerial practice is to function as author and in this way influence the organization, the department, or the work group to turn its perspective in a new direction. This is rather close to the popular and heavily discussed theme of storytelling and discourses in organizations (Boje 2008; Gabriel 2000). Methodologically this imply that a study of management is a study of authoring in several perspectives: the writing of memos, the heading of meetings, the conversation with individual employees, and the discussion with customers, suppliers, financial institution-, and local government representatives.

*K1: 'Now we have a more systematic way to move forward [to get into a new market]. We start a process. We contact the five best off-line stores, the two best on-line stores, trade fairs, media – which might be bloggers: And I tells them: I am [the managing director of firm K] and ask them: Who do you think is the best for us to collaborate with on you market. And it is amazing how open people are.'*

Authoring is not only something that goes on inside the firm, but is also an important way of communicating with specific parts of the environment. Having said that, it is obvious that it is not an easy task to study management when it at the same time includes studying it: - in practice, - in organizations, - in relation to the environment, - and in the ongoing processes of emergence and uncertainty. One way seems perhaps to become a manager yourself, but on the other hand hardly any manager with a certain organizational responsibility has time, motivation, and energy to study such processes methodologically and systematically. So other ways have to be used.

In the literature on the so-called qualitative methodology many useful advices on how to handle this have been presented (Kvale 1996; Robson 2011), and we see it as important to use several of these advices, not at least the advice when using a specific design to look for more than one method for constructing knowledge – and at the same time accepting that a wall-to-wall coverage of daily management does not seem possible.

What we draw upon methodologically is the idea of flexible method (op cit.:130) which means that we, as it also happens in much managerial work, form the trail as we walk it. To us it is useful to have an agreement with the research field and its actors on the more general lines of a study, but the specific steps are mutually agreed upon not before, but during the actual research process. We include, when it is useful: the reading of documents, the study of web-sites, shadowing (Czarniawska 2007), and are also inspired by the more qualitative elements in Mintzbergs classic and ground-breaking study of management (Mintzberg 1973). In total we are quite pragmatic in our choice of investigation techniques as long as they are or can be brought in accordance with the overall relational framework.

*S1: 'I must admit – I have spoken to some friends in the industry about what they do – but there are not so many friends as be-*

*fore [the financial crises] they are not in the industry any more. But I have also spoken with people on trade fairs. And if we are not competitors, I often talk about my experiences and challenges.'*

Not only having conversations with the managers and employees within the firm is needed. It is also important, but not always easy for managers, to find external people to discuss with on important challenges and possibilities. Therefore we, according to our method, invite managers from different organizations together with us to analyze and discuss the challenges of each other.

Our main technique for knowledge construction, Action Learning (AL), was from its early development in the nineteen forties certainly never thought of as being in accordance with the overall framework we use today. One could say that AL from its early start in the UK after the Second World War did not, in a research perspective, have an overall framework, but was a creative method for improving the skills of managers – in the mining industry - by bringing managers together for the discussion of challenges and solutions. AL is an educational method developed by Reg. Revans (Revans 1983; Pedler, Burgoyne & Brook 2006).

What we have done in our research projects since we started has been to invite a small number of firms and their managing directors, to, all together, discuss the actual strategic challenges for their particular firms, to have all the managing directors and us commenting upon challenges, analyzes and ideas for exploiting these challenges in the individual firm. And in the first couple of years during a number of projects to have a series of such meeting, and in between having us as researchers visiting these firms interviewing managers and employees to follow the strategic development within the individual firm.

The process of having the managing directors discussing with each other and us has strong parallels to AL, because we also see our method as a learning process, but not only for the managing directors – also for us as researchers – on the subject of strategic management in small and medium sized firms. Through a number of short, ¾ year, projects our research group worked - actually from 2005 to 2008 – on the 'technical' part of the method. And from 2009 – 2012 we had one larger project on strategic management - during the period of severe financial crises - with four firms. From 2012- 2014 we participated with fellow researchers in a research project, using some of the same techniques, on firm development with five firms, and from the fall of 2014 we are working on a project with five firms within the fashion industry. The quotes in this paper have been taken from the first round of conversations in this research project.

From a rather practical start developing the actual techniques the design has gradually from 2008 included an increasing number of social construction elements and is being refined concerning method and epistemology. In our method the relational ideas on management have become increasingly important. And at the same time the idea that process and change are the important keys to understanding management has been elaborated upon in the specific forms in which we



participate in conversations and how we write cases. Interpretations, dynamics, flux and emergence are recognized as important part of the design.

Included into this, what happens 'in the moment' for managers seems to a large extent to be activities with the intention of trying to figure out what are the most efficient understanding and handling of the environment in the very near future, how it is possible to use experiences and knowledge to do this, and how it is possible to get rid of a number of 'taken-for-granted' not any longer useful for the organization. And a second important question seems to be how management does deploy the resources of the organization in ways that at the same time results in deliverances to customers right now and preparation for a future rather unknown.

Behind the study of these rather practical efforts of managers are more theoretical questions on how knowledge and meaning are constructed, and how the management and the entire organization learn from these activities. How the view of organization might change into organizing and how managers discover and use that they in their capacity as practical authors are integrated into an understanding that action in some ways construct meaning more than the other way around – that communication is neither one or two ways, but mutual and polyphone (Cunliffe & Eriksen 2011), and that meaning is constructed in the moment and often later (Cunliffe & Shotter 2006).

Another important point in our design is for us to do our best to underline that even if it is possible to agree upon some of the more practical results of a study then every participant has the possibility to keep his or her epistemological stance and stick to his or her own interpretations. It is through the meeting between different and sometime contradictory interpretations and meaning that new meanings, interpretations and actions actually develop through the conversations. Our social constructionist approach has to be able to collaborate with managers with a functionalist, a positivistic, a critical realistic, or even a social constructivist view on their world, their organization, and the way they conduct management.

### **The design used in daily practice**

Even before we in practice started the now ongoing research project in 2014 we had explained to the potential participants our methodological and epistemological position. Actually we started the project by contacting an industry association and its managing director to whom we explained our intentions, our method, and our demands. The managing director was asked by us if he was able to find five firms that were members of his association, and to get the managing directors of these firms interested in participating in our project for a two year period. In total he contacted six managing directors using a short written description made by us and him, three said immediately yes, one said yes after a period of consideration, one did not have the time available, and the last contacted said yes.

Our experiences tell us that the idea of having a kind of broker with interest in the general findings of the research project, and no direct interest in the individual firm, but an associative relation to all the firms, is an efficient medium to get in contact with managing directors. In the start period of the earlier research projects we have used different kinds of brokers: a regional business development agency, a municipal business development agency, and an industry association.

At the same time it seems important that the participating firms are not in direct competition with each other, but on the other hand not too closely co-operating and doing a lot of business together. In both such examples there is a severe risk that their managers become too formalistic, and not open concerning what they want to tell.

One of the elements in our design is the interplay between our meeting with the individual firm talking with managers and employees selected by them, and the meeting in the entire group of the five managing directors and us. The flexibility of the design allows us to start with individual meetings or with a meeting within the entire group. What we do depends on the specific circumstances. And the most important circumstance is of course that the manager is present, and not on business trips to France, China, the US, or Norway.

To bind the two activities together: the meetings between us and the individual firm, and the meetings for the managers from all the firms we work with something we call cases. A case is a short 3-4 pages 'story' that is written by us on the actual strategic situation in each firm as it could be interpreted from our last visit in the firm. These cases are constructed from the conversations made during our visit, our reading of document, etc. The draft for a case-description is written by us and e-mailed to the managing director for corrections and supplements. When such corrections are received we write the final version, which is e-mailed to all the managing directors a week or so before the next meeting – and before the meeting all the managing directors have read the cases from all firm.

Such a case is a kind of snap-shot - in the moment - of the challenges and possibilities, and the assessments and allocation of resources for handling these challenges and using the possibilities seen by the management. As it is constructed out of the conversations, we have made in the firm and material we have studied from the firm, a case contains hopes, ideas, assessments of risks, and interpretations of the relations between the firm and its environment. It is in itself open to interpretations and tries to give impressions of the firm and its possibilities in the ways the managing director and other from the firm, who have participated in conversations with us, interpret them at the moment we have visited the firm.

One detail concerning the way these cases are constructed is important. That is the way we participate in the conversations that become input to the individual case. We try to get our partners – the managing director and other employees in the firm – to tell the story about challenges and possibilities the way they want to tell it. But at the same time, when important subjects are presented we do not hesitate in the conversation directly to try to present alternative interpretations

and together with our partner see what that leads the conversation into. What we do here is to mix expertise between our partner in the conversation and us to bring the construction of knowledge further. But we try never to provoke. We are all partners in the conversation together with the managing director and/or another manager or employee in the firm to try to construct more than one single interpretation of challenges, possibilities, resources etc.

*K1. 'me and [my partner K2] are too bad at talking about it. We are too bad at evaluating – because we have moved on. We were much better during the first years [the firm existed].'*

As mentioned earlier in this paper, reflection with fellow managers about the direction of the firm is seen as very important, but it also seems as if it often is very difficult to keep finding time and place for such reflections in the daily work with many operational tasks.

Such kinds of conversations are not only taking place during our visits in the individual firm. They also are the reason for establishing meetings including all the managing directors and us. At those meetings it is the idea that everyone has an obligation to look at each individual case from the perspectives he or she chose. At the meeting a case is presented very shortly by the managing director – unless another strategic challenge has emerged for that particularly firm in the meantime, because then it is the privilege for the managing director to focus on that instead. After this short presentation the other managing directors have the possibility to articulate and discuss what they interpret from the case. This is done for all five cases at each of these meetings.

This way of researching has two main goals. One is that the individual managing director is presented with alternative interpretations – and perhaps different ideas for solutions. The other is that these challenges and the discussion between the directors – including us - open up other ways to understand strategic challenges as they are seen from a practical point of view – and how different directors try to work to use these kinds of possibilities and handle such emerging challenges. There is to us not one correct way to do that – there are several ways where the final choice depends on rather pragmatic reasons.

*E1: 'And it is a normal situation in a firm like this, you can't get around it. You will not find the [exact] right solutions – only 'smart' solutions. They will do the job, but not really efficient.'*

Pragmatism is not only a principle, but also a practical 'reality' for managers. The idea that it is possible or even clever to search for the 'optimal' solution seems rather distant. The pragmatism is to a large extent a criterion for managers in their daily managerial work. In their interpretation of everyday the way to see challenges and ideas for solutions are done from a perspective of usefulness. At the same time the managers experience and express the dynamics of managing as processes moving ahead and with a considerable weight on uncertainty, risk and chance. To study these interpretations we use the idea of doing our research longitudinally. The process of conver-

sations in the individual firms and the meetings between the managing directors are repeated four times a year. The plan for the present study is app. eight rounds over a period of two years.

During that period we also have some pragmatism in the shape of flexible method (Robson 2011) involved. Above we have concentrated especially on describing the first part of the two year period and the first conversations. But later in the process we chose other types of conversations when they are useful. Up to now we have mentioned conversations with individual managers and employees and meetings with all the managing directors, reading of documents and writing of cases. But we already have had the first group-conversation in a couple of the firms, and when it become useful we want to follow individual managers for a day or two – in a kind of shadowing – not so much to observe, but to talk with the manager concerning daily activities at the moment when they happen.

The pragmatic perspective also underlines another characteristic behind the design. This is to let the managing directors and their firms become the parts who in the production of information are prioritizing what is important. Of course, we are participating in all conversations – asking and commenting – but it has to be what the individual director experiences as important that sets the agenda for the conversations. And it is with assistance from the other directors that such experiences are interpreted and sometime turned upside down.

What we get out of all these conversations are impressions of managerial activities over time meeting emergent challenges from the environment, but also from the deployment and development of internal resources and capabilities to meet such challenges. The process also reveals pictures of sense making and meaning constructing processes where the important interpretations processes are constructed between the managing directors – and us.

### **Possible outcomes and actual limitations of the design**

In principle this design makes the method dependent on what the individual managing director – and his or her firm experience as important for the development of markets, products, communication, production and design processes, and the firm as such. But if an emerging process is not interpreted as important there is a great chance that it will simply not be seen. Changes emerging from the environment can be left unseen until they literally might bring the firm to the brink of bankruptcy. But that is a 'fact of business', and hopefully the firm sees this danger before it is too late, and in this respect we have a case of emergency.

But this of course points at both an important outcome and an important limitation of the design that could be illustrated with a simple example: The design acknowledge that the risk of bankruptcy is a consequence of the way the market economy function, but it is only when such risk is seen

by a managing director and measures are taken to interpret and act upon such a risk that is becomes part of the actual social construction processes we study.

Our design focuses in this perspective on micro-activities, things happening on a daily basis, and practical ways to act and interpret. The intention of using the design is through conversations, case analyses, and shadowing to open for the interplay between concrete action and reflections within the framework of flux, uncertainty and practical experiments. Included into this is the ways emergent changes are experienced and through interpretations transformed into processes to be dealt with at the local level in the form of specific action, and the choice of suitable solution. En example of what seems important is described here.

#### INTO THE CHINESE MARKET

An example of importance for more than one of the firms in the Fall of 2014 starts from articles in the Danish press on the golden opportunities in the upcoming Chinese market, followed by the activities of Danish trade associations to underline these opportunities, and the activities of the Danish Foreign Office and export councils to invite managers of private business on promotion trips to China, and how this is interpreted in the individual firm and in the end - in several of the five firms - results in new activities directed toward this market, and is creating opinions of that market among the managing directors.

*S 1: "Sometimes you talk about Chinese as rather static. That is not the case concerning my suppliers. They are very innovative and have started their own web-shops*

*G 2: " One day – (after the Mao-cloth) China became a certain sort of market economy – and at this point in time all rules were laid down – and then it has to stay this way."*

So China seems to play an increasing strategic role for these managing directors. It is not any longer only because Chinese firms are producing for the Danish firms, but increasingly China is seen as an upcoming market for at least three of the firms.

One of the limitations of our design is of course that even if all the firms chose to prioritize the Chinese market the interpretations and the actual actions in practice develop at least in as many directions as the number of firms involved. The limitation is in this perspective that the design is not directed toward the construction of averages and classifications, but to show the diversity coming out of daily actions.

Diversity and the influence of daily relations are important subjects to be studied within our methodological design. It is processes and the responses on emergence and uncertainty that are in focus. It is how it becomes possible to manage in meshwork through processes of wayfaring not really knowing what the next day will bring and what suddenly will emerge both externally from the market, competitors, suppliers and the bank, and internally from new interpretations and new social constructions among the staff, department or important groups.

At the same time it is to analyze how the taken-for-granted, the routines and specific practices all are important elements in getting the firm forwards, and at the same time elements that influences the interpretations of the emergent and perhaps hinders for different forms of exploitations of the emergent.

The results of the research process are a number of reflections made by the managers and us together on processes of (strategic) importance to the individual firm on how to respond to emergent challenges and opportunities as they are interpreted firstly by the individual managers – and us - and secondly of the entire group of managers and us. These reflections are according to our design neither final nor in any perspective objective. But they are reflections that might be of interests to other managers and researchers working to analyze every-day micro-processes in practice with the intention to understand and perhaps to respond to the dynamics of these kinds of activities.

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